

What are GRAS' roots?

GRAS ACADEMY, WITH ITS WELL-FUNCTIONING INFRASTRUCTURE IN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN NORTH INDIA, IS A NATURAL PARTNER FOR ANY NATIONAL-LEVEL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT MISSION. WITH ITS PROVEN TRACK EXPERTISE IN TRAINING, IT'S NOW PARTNERING NSDC IN ITS SKILLS DEVELOPMENT TARGET. MEHA MATHUR DESCRIBES HOW GRAS ACADEMY IS DOING ITS BIT, IN THIS NEW SERIES ON NSDC PARTNERS

WHY reinvent the wheel and block those extra crores on buildings and blackboards when that basic infrastructure exists in the country? This would have been the thinking of the policy makers when they launched The National Skills Development Corporation to help fund skills development projects of private training providers. And now, the NSDC, seeing merit in the capacities of such training providers, is welcoming their partnership in the skilling mission of India. One such partners is GRAS Academy, GRAS Education and Training Services Ltd, headquartered in NOIDA.

The Academy was launched in 2007, and started its operations in 2008, the first training being in the Rajasthan Mission on Livelihoods (RMoL), in three districts. The training covered retail, hospitality, basic computer, tally and mobile repair. Tahsin Zahid, Director and CEO, Gras Academy, informs that this project required GRAS to set up infrastructure and provide trainers.



four months. We became national delivery partners in Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, Bihar, Uttaranchal, and UP." In Uttar Pradesh it opened 16 centres. The capacity of a centre was 250 candidates at any given point, and since the courses were in MES mode, it could train 1,000 candidates per centre per year. However, things faltered in April 2010 when DGET put a temporary hold on the scheme, affecting many a training provider, including GRAS. "They didn't issue payments or the certificates. As many as 7,000 certificates are still pending," says Zahid.

Now that the infrastructure was in place and there was the worry of its lying unused,

GREAT LEAP

In March 2009 came a giant leap for GRAS when it tied up with DGET to become a training provider under DGET's MES scheme. "We had to operate on a much larger canvas and therefore had to open 30 centres in

GRAS decided to launch its own courses, on a commercial scale. This time there was a different focus, on content. Zahid says, "DGET courses are not content based. Only chapters are listed. A lot depends on how a trainer